IT Infrastructure in the Villages

1463. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to connect villages with the IT infrastructure;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and how would Ministry help villages to use and enjoy the fruits of IT boom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) National Informatics Centre (NIC) is providing network backbone and e-governance support upto district level.

Department of Information Technology (DIT) has recently announced the Policy guidelines to provide support to State Governments to establish State wide Area Networks (SWANs) from the State headquarters up to the block level with a minimum bandwidth capacity of 2 Mbps to provide services electronically to citizens at the village level by extending its reach through wireless and other technologies relevant for the last mile.

DIT has set up 487 Community Information Centres (CICs) in block headquarters of eight North Eastern States providing connectivity at grass-root level for socio-economic development of the region. DIT has taken up setting up of 135 CICs in block headquarters in the Jammu & Kashmir State. These CICs are a citizen interface for IT enabled e-government services and training.

DIT has set up "Media Lab Asia" to innovate research, develop and undertake pilot deployment of ICT and other technologies for the benefit of common man. MLAsia has identified rural connectivity, education, healthcare and empowerment of disabled persons as its thrust areas and has supported several projects in these areas.